

REMARKS

The final Office Action dated November 9, 2006, and the patents and publications cited therein have been carefully reviewed, and in view of the above changes and following remarks reconsideration and allowance of all the claims pending in the application are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-12 are pending. Claims 1-6 and 10-12 stand rejected. Claims 7-9 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 13-20 stand withdrawn.

By this response, claims 1 and 8 have been amended and claims 7 and 13-20 have been canceled.

The Amendments To The Claims

Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the limitations of claim 7. Claim 7 stands objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 8 has been amended to change the dependency of claim 8 to now be from claim 1. As the amendment to claim 8 is directed to a formal matter and does not narrow the scope of claim 8, no prosecution-history estoppel results from the amendment.

Claims 13-20 have been canceled to place the application in condition for allowance.

The Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Over King

Claims 1-6 and 12 stand finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over King et al. (King), U.S. Patent No. 6,530,004.

Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the limitations of claim 7, which has been indicated to contain allowable subject matter.

Thus, claim 1 is allowable over King. It follows that claims 2-6 and 12, which each incorporate the limitations of claim 1, are each allowable for at least the same reasons that claim 1 is considered allowable.

Consequently, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw this rejection and allow claims 1-6 and 12.

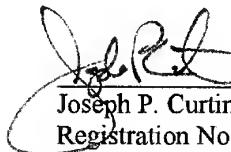
CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and arguments which present the claims in better form for consideration on appeal, it is urged that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner find that a telephonic or personal interview would expedite passage to issue of the present application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

It is requested that this application be passed to issue with claims 1-6 and 8-12

Respectfully submitted,

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